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Letter dated 16 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that during the presidency of Denmark, the Security Council is scheduled to hold a debate on the subject of post-conflict peacebuilding on Thursday, 26 May 2005.

Denmark has prepared the attached non-paper to help guide the discussion on this subject (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ellen Margrethe **Løj**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

05-34611 (E) 180505

Annex to the letter dated 16 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Discussion paper for the open debate on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding on May 26, 2005

On May 26, 2005, The Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Per Stig Møller, will preside over an open debate of the Security Council on post-conflict peacebuilding. The Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank or his representative are expected to address the Council on the issue.

The objective is to discuss the current policy-, institutional-, and financial challenges in post-conflict peacebuilding with a view to strengthening coherence and consistency of Security Council action while keeping in mind that the Council is but one of several players in this field. The open debate is not intended to duplicate the current deliberations in the General Assembly on possible modalities of a Peacebuilding Commission and other reform proposals in the Secretary-General's report *In Larger Freedom*, but rather to address some of the underlying problems and issues in peacebuilding.

In recent years, the Security Council has become increasingly involved in setting the broad parameters for post-conflict peacebuilding, which refers to the period immediately following cessation of hostilities and encompasses the daunting tasks of reconciliation, reconstruction and transformation. The UN today often intervenes on the basis of a multidimensional mandate that extends well beyond responding to humanitarian needs and the monitoring of a peace-agreement. The goals of peacebuilding are to rebuild the state and its institutions, to establish effective and democratic governance and rule of law, to ensure an environment of security, in order to prevent relapse into violence and lay the foundation for long-term sustainable development. Although the United Nations has made significant progress in managing post-conflict situations, inter alia based on the findings of the Brahimi report, substantial challenges remain in the *policy-, institutional-, and financial* fields.

Delegations participating in the open debate may wish to address some of the following issues:

- One important *policy challenge* is to ensure greater ownership and capacity among local actors to devise and implement post-conflict peacebuilding strategies in order to make them more acceptable, implementable and sustainable. More should be done to develop truly participatory dialogues between the UN and local stakeholders and build capacity to respond to the unique circumstances surrounding each conflict situation. Ownership is, however, no panacea for peace and stability. In some cases it may be necessary for the UN to regard ownership as the end, not the means, of its presence in a country. Typically, this would apply when insecurity demands the UN to assume state-like functions. In such situations the UN must communicate clearly to the public the rationale for its decisions in this regard. Local

capacity building and preference to local procurement are ways of strengthening local empowerment and involvement. Another *policy challenge* relates to the growing realization that narrowly conceived country-based peacebuilding strategies are unlikely to succeed in regional settings where conflicts have interlocking political, security, humanitarian and economic dynamics across borders. Policies will thus have to be conceived and implemented with a clear regional perspective.

How do we square the imperative of breeding ownership to peacebuilding strategies through inclusive and consultative processes with the often legitimate expectation of rapid outside intervention to stabilize the situation in circumstances where local state structures are weak and incapable of assuming such functions ? How do we strengthen the ability of international actors to adapt their assistance to the political dynamics of the war-torn societies they seek to support? Could and should more be done to fashion regional solutions to cross-border problems (e.g. mercenaries, including child soldiers in West Africa) ?

- Providing assistance in re-building a war-torn society requires a comprehensive strategy. As widely acknowledged, there is, however, currently no clear *institutional* mechanism for the formulation of a comprehensive strategy for peacebuilding. Typically, the Security Council formulates a mandate that identifies a number of goals to be achieved, but these mandates do not contain a description on *how* these goals are to be achieved. Although some progress has been made in recent years there is need to ensure much stronger involvement from the UN development and humanitarian agencies in the UN Integrated Mission Planning Process for post-conflict situations under the auspices of DPKO. The planning process should be more inclusive, better use should be made of the knowledge and experience already residing in the UN Country Teams and the BWI's, duplication by peacebuilding missions of already existing UN capacities in the field should be avoided, and best practises should be compiled and disseminated in order to avoid "reinventing the wheel" each time. It is a truism that strategies and plans developed at HQ-level with little or no consideration for either the on-going programmes in the country or to contingencies on the ground run the risk of becoming obsolete. But the opposite applies as well: Efforts at integration and coordination at the country-level are likely to have limited effect in the absence of better integration between relevant actors within the political, developmental and humanitarian fields at HQ-level. Further coordination does not in itself ensure ownership, responsibility or accountability. On the contrary, coordination can become an end in itself diverting energy and resources from the implementation in the field. The central challenge of coordination is that all participating actors in fact do commit themselves and feel ownership to an overall strategy and plan.

How do we forge stronger commitment and buy-ins from the various stakeholders within and outside the UN to joint peacebuilding strategies both at country and HQ-level ?

- There is no 'one size fits all' when it comes to the different elements in a post-conflict peacebuilding strategy. An ad hoc approach must prevail taking the unique local circumstances

into account, but some elements are crucial in most post-conflict efforts such as rebuilding institutions, good governance, transitional justice, DDR programmes, and ensure an environment of security. Security sector reform is an element, which is often mentioned, but rarely integrated systematically in post conflict strategies. A particularly crucial element is the rapid (re) establishment of the fundamental principles of the rule of law. Capacity to provide assistance in this field is currently scattered through out the UN system. The European Union has build civilian capabilities in various fields, including within the rule of law. Due attention should be paid to be possibilities of the UN benefiting from such capabilities or, in some fields, building its own.

How do we best identify the needs, the tools and the actors when considering a peacebuilding strategy? Should more be done to encourage development funds, programmes and agencies to develop a clearer division of labour based on comparative advantages and to pick up specializations, such as assistance in security sector reform and rule of law, where gaps are identified ?

- Among the *financial* challenges is the ability for rapid response. Although peacebuilding is a long-term endeavour the ability to respond to the immediate needs of the public in the areas of security, justice and living conditions are often critical to winning over the public and establishing the credibility of the UN operation. Still, the UN is notoriously slow in responding to the need for rapid initiation of peacebuilding activities due to the lack of pre-existing funds. Valuable time is thus lost while special appeals are launched and donors respond. While the system is reasonable effective in getting military personnel on the ground in a timely fashion i.a. through rapid deployment arrangements, no similar mechanisms exist to ensure quick deployment of the necessary civilian personnel. As a result vacancy rates for civilian personnel in most operations average 30-50 percent, which severely impairs mission performance in peacebuilding.

What are the options for ensuring adequate, predictable and flexible funding to support post-conflict peacebuilding? Should a greater part of peacebuilding costs be funded through assessed contributions or left to voluntary arrangements ? Should one consider a "Civilians rapid deployment Mechanism" consisting of judges, administrators, police, election observers etc on stand-by for UN missions ?